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PAGE 01 STATE 091610

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FOLLOWING REPEAT NEW DELHI 5616 ACTION STATE, INFO ABU DHABI, ADDIS ABABA, BANGKOK, CANBERRA, COLOMBO, DACCA, DAR ES SALAAM, ISLAMABAD, KAJARTA, JIDDA, KABUL, KATHMANDU, KUALA LUMPUR, KUWAIT, LISBON, LONDON, MOGADISCIO, MOSCOW, NAIROBI, PARIS, PORT LOUIS, PRETORIA, RANGOON, SANAA, SINGAPORE, TANANARIVE, TEHRAN, TOKYO, WELLINGTON, PEKING, BRUSSELS, GENEVA, USUN NEW YORK, BOMBAY, CALCUTTA, HONGKONG, MADRAS, CINCPAC 26 APRIL 1974. QUOTE:

S E C R E T NEW DELHI 5616

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, PARM, IN, US, XO

SUBJ: THE INDIAN OCEAN: AN EMBASSY VIEW

REF: NEW DELHI 5376 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: THIS IS A LONG CABLE. TRY TO READ TO THE END.
WHAT YOU WILL FIND THERE, AFTER SOME TALK ABOUT US INTERESTS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AND INDIAN CONCERNS, ARE SUGGESTIONS ABOUT HOW THROUGH POLITICAL INITIATIVES WE MIGHT PROMOTE OUR SECURITY INTERESTS IN THE AREA. IN ESSENCE WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A SIMPLE CONSISTENT, LONG-RANGE RATIONALE FOR WHATEVER WE ARE GOING TO
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PAGE 02 STATE 091610

DO WITH RESPECT TO DEPLOYMENTS AND BASING OUT HERE. SOMETHING

WE IN THE FIELD CAN COUNT ON, CAN LEAN ON. AND WE WOULD HOPE FOR MORE ACTIVE US PARTICIPATION IN MOLLING TO OUR PURPOSES ON GOING DISCUSSIONS ABOUT INDIAN OCEAN RESTRAINTS, LIMITATIONS, AND PEACE ZONE. END SUMMARY.

1. SITTING IN DELHI, WE OF COURSE DON'T HAVE A FULL PICTURE OF WHERE THE BALANCE OF US INTERESTS FALL WITH REGARD TO OUR MILITARY POSTURE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN: THE RANGE OF OUR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND MILITARY OBJECTIVES TOWARD THE INDIAN OCEAN LITTORAL STATES, THE MIDDLE EAST, CHINA AND THE USSR. WE'VE NOT BEEN TOLD. PERHAPS WE DON'T REALLY NEED TO KNOW.

2. THE US HAS HAD SHIPS SAILING IN THE INDIAN OCEAN FOR YEARS. WHY DO WE JUST NOW FIND IT IMPORTANT TO BUILD UP OUR FACILITY ON DIEGO GARCIA? MERCHANT SHIPS HAVE NOT BEEN INTERFERED WITH ON THE HIGH SEAS EXCEPT IN TIME OF WAR FOR DECADES. DO WE REALLY REQUIRE A SUBSTANTIAL NAVAL PRESENCE IN ORDER TO KEEP THE SEA LANES OPEN? DO WE BELIEVE THAT AN OVER-THE-HORIZON PRESENCE OF A NAVAL FLOTILLA WILL SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGE OR INFLUENCE THE POLICIES OF THE OIL STATES OF THE MIDDLE EAST OR INDIA? DO WE BELIEVE THE SOVIETS INTEND TO USE THEIR VESSELS TO THREATEN THE COUNTRIES OF THE AREA, AND THAT WE WOULD NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT TIME TO REACT IN THEIR DEFENSE UNLESS WE HAVE A MORE REGULAR AND SYSTEMATIC PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN? OR THAT A US NAVAL PRESENCE IS RELEVANT TO A SOVIET THREAT TO LITTORAL STATES INHERENT IN THE SOVIETS' GEOGRAPHIC PROPINQUITY? IS IT OUR ASSESSMENT THAT THE MOVEMENT OF THE HANCOCK TASK FORCE PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS LAST FALL?

3. ALL THESE ARE QUESTIONS THE INDIANS HAVE ASKED US, AND WHICH WE FIND IT DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE EVEN TO ATTEMPT TO ANSWER. THEY ALL RELATE TO THE BROAD STRATEGIC VIEW THE US HAS OF THIS AREA AND HOW WE BELIEVE OUR MILITARY RESOURCES PLAY A ROLE IN INFLUENCING POLICY AND EVENTS. THEY ARE NOT ALL QUESTIONS WE WOULD OR EVEN SHOULD ANSWER IF ASKED. BUT THE ANSWERS SHOULD BE MADE CLEAR AND UNDERSTANDABLE TO ALL US DIPLOMATS IF THEY ARE TO COMPREHEND THE WELL-SPRINGS OF OUR POLICY IN THIS AREA OF THE WORLD.

4. THERE ARE THREE POSSIBLE INTERESTS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN:
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PAGE 03 STATE 091610

(1) FREE AND UNIMPAIRED MOVEMENT FOR US AND ALLIED MERCHANT SHIPS PARTICULARLY TO THE PERSIAN GULF--AND FOR OUR NAVAL VESSELS IN MOVING BETWEEN OCEANS; (2) AN OPTION TO DEPLOY SLBM'S IN THIS STRATEGIC AREA; (3) A CAPABILITY AT SOME POINT, IF WE WISH, TO EXERT PRESSURE FOR POLITICAL/MILITARY REASONS ON SOME OF THE COUNTRIES BORDERING THE OCEAN AND A CAPABILITY TO INHIBIT THE SOVIETS FROM DOING SO. THE FIRST INTEREST IS CLEAR AND UNEXCEPTIONAL TO INDIA AND, WE BELIEVE, TO ALL THE OTHER COUNTRIES

ON THE INDIAN OCEAN LITTORAL. THE SECOND IS ONE OF THOSE CLOSET SKELETONS WHICH MANY OF THE LITTORAL COUNTRIES SUSPECT, WHICH SOME--INCLUDING INDIA--FEAR, AND WHICH VIRTUALLY ALL WILL BELIEVE TO BE TRUE REGARDLESS OF WHAT WE MAY PROFESS IN PUBLIC. THE THIRD INTEREST IS THE ONE WHICH WOULD CREATE THE GREATEST FRUSTRATION AND SUSPICION IN INDIA AND WHOSE RATIONALE WE, QUITE FRANKLY, WOULD FIND MOST DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN AND JUSTIFY.

5. INDIA'S COLONIAL EXPERIENCE OF ASSUALT FROM THE SEA STILL LINGERS VIVIDLY IN INDIAN MINDS AND WAS FRESHLY POLISHED BY THE ENTERPRISE TASK FORCE IN 1971. FOR INDIANS, AIRCRAFT CARRIERS AND THEIR ENTOURAGE MEAN POTENTIAL INTERVENTION. TRUE, INDIA WAS MORE THAN HAPPY TO HAVE A US NAVAL PRESENCE IN THE BAY OF BENGAL IN 1962 WHEN IT WAS BEING PRESSED BY THE CHINESE, BUT PRECISELY FOR THIS REASON IT ASSUMES THAT A US NAVAL PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN IS DESIGNED TO PERMIT THE US TO THREATEN TO INTERVENE ELSEWHERE--PERHAPS AGAINST INDIA THE NEXT TIME. AND THE TESTIMONY GIVEN THIS SPRING ON THE HILL IN CONNECTION WITH DIEGO GARCIA ENCOURAGES THIS CONCLUSION SINCE IT FRANKLY ENVISAGES US FORCES FUNCTIONING AS A DETERRENT WITH REGARD TO "INTERNAL TENSIONS" AND "UNRESOLVED DIFFERENCES" BETWEEN NEIGHBORING STATES IN ZF AREA.

6. LOOKED AT FROM THE VANTAGE POINT OF NEW DELHI, WE CONCLUDE THAT THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT IS SINCERE IN ITS BELIEF THAT A SUBSTANTIAL US MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AREA IS NOT IN THE INDIAN INTEREST. THE PRESENCE IS DIRECTED EITHER AT THE USSR, IN WHICH CASE THE SOVIETS WILL CERTAINLY BUILD UP A COUNTER-FORCE TO DEAL WITH IT, OR IT IS DIRECTED AT OTHER AFRO-ASIAN STATES, IN WHICH CASE THE SOVIETS MAY ALSO BECOME INVOLVED. MOREOVER, THE INDIANS SEE THEMSELVES AS BIG BOYS ON THE INDIAN OCEAN LITTORAL AND DON'T WANT ANY EXTERNAL POWERS MUCKING ABOUT IN THE WATER TO BALANCE OFF NEIGHBORS AGAINST ONE ANOTHER. THEY ARE MORE SUSPICIOUS

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PAGE 04 STATE 091610

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